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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

*Memorandum of Conversation*

DATE: 4/19/61

SUBJECT: Conversation Between The President and  
Premier Manley of Jamaica

PARTICIPANTS: The President  
Norman Manley, Premier of Jamaica  
Ivan B. White, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State  
for European Affairs [GW]

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The President received Premier Manley at 3:40 p.m. April 19. He told Mr. Manley that the United States was greatly interested in the development of the West Indian Federation and its future and inquired as to the progress being made. Mr. Manley in reply said that the present schedule called for a constitutional convention in Port of Spain in May to be followed by a conference in London commencing May 31. At the latter it was expected that remaining differences would be ironed out and that the date for independence would be established, probably for April next year. At some date following the London conference Jamaica would hold a referendum to decide whether it would stay in the Federation or get out. He had promised such a referendum because the opposition party, after many years of a bi-partisan approach to matters, had declared itself in opposition to federation. Mr. Manley said he was unsure as to how the referendum would turn out. He could have won the referendum two months ago but due to two blunders by Federation authorities the issue was in doubt. However, he, Manley, was going to exert every personal effort to include Jamaica in the Federation. He was convinced that over the long term a strong Federation would be an element of stability in the Caribbean area. Furthermore, a Federation was in the United States' interest because the alternative was fragmentation into ten small and weak states.

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- 2 -

When the President inquired as to what the United States Government could do to be helpful in this matter, Premier Manley said he had considered this question and had decided that there was one helpful measure which the President himself could take. It would be most helpful if after the London conference, the President could issue a statement pointing to United States interest in the development of a strong Federation, to the community of interests between Americans and West Indians, and making a clear explanation of the intention of the United States Government to participate actively in the economic and social development of the West Indies along the lines of the program evolved for Latin America. Mr. White informed the President that he had discussed this matter briefly with Richard Goodwin of the White House staff and that there were possibilities of working out something through recasting the President's message to Congress on the Latin American program in terms specifically directed to the Federation of the West Indies. The President instructed Mr. White to follow up on this matter with Mr. Goodwin.

Mr. Manley then said that he and his colleagues had studied with great interest the President's message to Congress of March 13, 1961, and that they accept the challenge contained therein. Jamaica accepted the criteria set forth, including all aspects of self-help, in the field of economic and social progress. In return he was looking to the United States for assistance in meeting two highest priority problems; namely, low cost housing and water supply. Jamaica was not asking for grants, but rather needed long term loans at low interest rates. In reply to a question from the President Mr. Manley said that Jamaica was financially sound, was the first of the British colonies to borrow on the New York market, and was capable of servicing additional loans. Trinidad likewise was in good financial condition and had a per capita income 50% higher than Jamaica. Although the smaller islands in the Federation were in a deficit position, there was no reason why they could not be brought to the point of self support in 4 or 5 years.

When the President referred to their mutual acquaintanceship with John Pringle, Mr. Manley said that Pringle had evolved a proposal for financing such areas as the West Indies in which the American people had an interest. This would provide for a fund in which those interested could invest, with repayment guaranteed by the United States Government. The funds would be used for capital development in the West Indies. The President replied that the availability of capital appeared to be the big problem.

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- 3 -

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The President then took the initiative to say that he understood that Premier Manley was interested in questions concerning bauxite, immigration and aviation. The President had told Mr. Macmillan what he proposed to do in regard to the immigration quota and assumed that the Prime Minister had informed Mr. Manley. Mr. Manley replied in the affirmative. He said that in the case of bauxite, arrangements for stockpiling had been very useful to Jamaica, but that it would be helpful in planning production ahead if barter arrangements could be worked out covering a two or three year period rather than the single year system currently in effect. As regards aviation the British and the U.S. at the Barbados conference last year had reached agreement on a package covering additional air routes between the U.S. and West Indies which was satisfactory to both parties. Unfortunately this package had been held up by global issues between the U.S. and U.K., such as Hong Kong, which had nothing to do with the Caribbean. The Federation of the West Indies and Jamaica were heavily dependent on the tourist trade and these additional air routes would be most helpful. He greatly hoped that the U.S. and U.K. could resolve this matter by June. The President instructed Mr. White to follow up this matter with Mr. Feldman to see what could be done.

Mr. Manley then raised the question of sugar quotas. He said that the sugar industry was vital to the West Indies; that our Ambassador (Whitney) at London and throughout the West Indies had laid great stress on economic cooperation between the U.S. and the West Indies; and that the West Indies was greatly disappointed at the small quota of 65,000 tons which had recently been announced as its share in the recent allocation. In closing, Mr. Manley said that he had promised to raise one additional question with the President and this referred to the six or seven thousand migratory workers who customarily come into the U.S. each season to work in agriculture. He understood that there was some opposition to permitting these workers into the U.S. and expressed the strong hope that this working arrangement would continue. It was most important to Jamaica because it provided a livelihood for workers, permitted them to send remittances to their families in Jamaica and, finally, it was excellent training in agriculture which permitted the workers to return eventually to Jamaica and establish their own farms. The President informed Mr. Manley that Mr. White and Mr. Goodwin would pursue actively all of the problems raised by the Premier.

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